



**A Guide for
Citizens
*Personnel
Complaint
Procedure***

PURPOSE

To ensure compliance with Section 832.5 of the California Penal Code which requires every agency to have a procedure to investigate citizens' complaints against a member of the Vernon Police Department.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Any individual who is directly involved in or witnesses an incident in which he/she believes a member of the Vernon Police Department has acted in a manner, which if true, would be classified as misconduct should bring the matter to the attention of the Department by:

1. Telephone, directly to the on-duty Watch Commander (323) 587-5171
2. In writing or electronically on-line, or
3. In person at the Police Department by speaking to a police supervisor; generally the on-duty Watch Commander

WHERE TO FILE A COMPLAINT IN PERSON

You may come to the Vernon Police Department, located at 4305 Santa Fe Avenue. When you come in, please inform the Records Clerk that you wish to speak to the on-duty Watch Commander regarding a complaint against a member of the Vernon Police Department. It is important that you request to speak to the Watch Commander rather than give details to the Records Clerk. The clerk has no involvement in the complaint process.

The Watch Commander will conduct a preliminary investigation to determine:

- Whether Vernon personnel were involved,
- The nature of the allegation;
- Jurisdiction and;
- Ascertain if there is validity to the complaint as opposed to the lack of understanding of agency procedures. Sometimes a complaint may be resolved by a simple explanation of our procedure.

You will be asked to complete and sign the Department's complaint form. You will be given a copy of the form.

HOW TO FILE A WRITTEN OR ELECTRONIC (ON-LINE) COMPLAINT

If you feel more comfortable mailing a letter or completing the complaint form electronically (on-line) rather than speaking with a police supervisor, you may send your letter detailing the facts of your complaint to:

Office of the Chief of Police
Vernon Police Department
4305 Santa Fe Avenue
Vernon, CA 90058

There is no established format for the written letter complaint, but you need to write down the important facts. It would also be helpful to us to list all known witnesses, along with their names and addresses. A follow-up investigator may contact you, therefore please include your return mailing address, a contact telephone number and your hours of availability.

You can also file your complaint electronically on-line by going to the City's website. The website address is: <http://www.cityofvernon.org> Go to the police department page and once there you will see a

link to personnel complaint forms. Once you have completed the complaint form; print out the form, sign and date the completed form and mail it to:

Office of the Chief of Police
Vernon Police Department
4305 Santa Fe Avenue
Vernon, CA 90058

HOW A PERSONNEL COMPLAINT IS HANDLED

The Chief of Police will review the complaint and determine whether it will be investigated further. After the investigation has been completed, it will be submitted for administrative review. The final administrative reviewer is the Chief of Police who determines the appropriate action to be taken. Pursuant to Penal Code Section 832.7(d), the Department will provide written notification to you of the disposition of the complaint within 30 days of the disposition.

CRIMINAL CHARGES AND COURT PROCEEDINGS

Many times people who have been arrested allege that they are not guilty of the charge. The validity of the arrest and the guilt or innocence of the person must be determined by a court of law, NOT the Police Department. Only the court is empowered by law to adjudicate such matters. The court proceedings provide an impartial forum where both sides of the case can be heard and the truth determined.